United Nations CEDAW/SP/2000/6

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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Meeting of States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
Eleventh meeting
New York, 31 August 2000

Report of the meeting of States parties

1. The eleventh meeting of the States parties was called to order on 31 August 2000 by the representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Angela E. V. King, Assistant Secretary-General, Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women, who acted as the temporary Chairperson.

2. The Assistant Secretary-General made a statement on behalf of the Secretary-General, in which she drew attention to several recommendations which were adopted by the General Assembly at its twenty-third special session entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century", in which the Assembly reviewed the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and decided on further actions and initiatives for its implementation. She noted that Governments had committed themselves to the principles of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, as well as to its implementation, and had agreed to create and maintain a non-discriminatory and gender-sensitive legal environment by 2005. Governments had also agreed to eliminate legislative gaps that left women and girls without protection of their rights and without effective recourse against gender-based discrimination and to ensure universal ratification of the Convention, the Optional Protocol to the Convention and acceptance of the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention, relating to the meeting time of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. While expressing disappointment that the target of universal ratification of the Convention by the year 2000, agreed by the Fourth World Conference on Women, had not been achieved, the Assistant Secretary-General said that it had been noted at the special session that the fact that 165 States parties had ratified or acceded to the Convention was one of the achievements in the implementation of the Platform for Action. She also stated that the adoption by the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session of the Optional Protocol to the Convention granting individuals and groups of women who had exhausted domestic remedies the right to submit petitions alleging violations of the Convention to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women was a significant achievement in the implementation of the Platform for Action.

3. The Assistant Secretary-General reported that 43 States parties to the Convention had signed the Optional Protocol and 5 had submitted instruments of ratification or accession. She indicated that the Secretariat was preparing for the entry into force of the Optional Protocol and was fully committed to supporting the Committee as it developed the procedures necessary for the instrument's administration.

4. She further observed that, since the tenth meeting of the States parties, on 17 February 1998, the

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Committee had held five sessions. In addition to considering the reports of 37 States parties, the Committee had adopted its twenty-fourth general recommendation on article 12 to the Convention concerning women and health. It had also adopted a statement on reservations and a statement on the legal framework for the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the links between the Convention and the Platform. The Committee had revised its rules of procedure, which would be adopted in final form at its twenty-fourth session, in January 2001. During the five sessions the Committee had adopted a number of important decisions and suggestions, including to convene its pre-session working group, which drew up the lists of issues and questions with regard to periodic reports prior to the session at which these reports were to be considered; and to ensure that the lists of issues and questions on periodic reports focused as much as possible on major areas of concern with respect to implementation of the Convention in States parties. The Committee had also revised its procedures and format for drawing up of concluding comments and had adopted procedures with regard to observations by States parties on concluding comments as well as deciding on guidelines on the situations in which exceptional reports should be requested from States parties.

5. The Assistant Secretary-General reported that there were 236 overdue reports and that at its twenty-third session the Committee had decided, on an exceptional basis and as a temporary measure, to invite States parties with overdue reports to combine them in a single document. She urged those States parties concerned, particularly those that had never reported, to implement the decision. In addition, she reminded the States parties that technical and advisory services with regard to the Convention and Optional Protocol were available on request through the Division for the Advancement of Women. She also urged States parties to accept the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, concerning the meeting time of the Committee.

6. Following the statement of the temporary Chairperson, Ambassador Mohamed Sacirbey (Bosnia and Herzegovina) was elected Chairperson of the meeting. Mr. Fesseha A. Tessema (Ethiopia), Ms. Atsuko Nishimura (Japan), Ambassador Claudia Fritsche (Liechtenstein) and Mr. Luis Raúl Estévez-López (Guatemala) were elected Vice-Chairpersons. The provisional agenda (CEDAW/SP/2000/1) was adopted.

7. In accordance with article 17, paragraphs 4 and 5, of the Convention, the States parties elected by secret ballot 11 members of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, of whom 4 were current members proposed for re-election. The experts re-elected were: Feride Acar (Turkey); María Yolanda Ferrer Gómez (Cuba); Aída González Martínez (Mexico); and Hanna Beate Schöpp-Schilling (Germany). The new members were: Sjiamsiah Achmad (Indonesia); Regina Tavares Da Silva (Portugal); Françoise Gaspard (France); Fatima Kwaku (Nigeria); Göran Melander (Sweden); Asha Rose Mtengeti-Migiro (United Republic of Tanzania); and Heisoo Shin (Republic of Korea). The list of candidates and their curricula vitae were contained in documents CEDAW/SP/2000/3 and CEDAW/SP/2000/3/Add.1.

8. The meeting had before it document CEDAW/SP/2000/2, submitted pursuant to article 28 of the Convention, which provides that "the Secretary-General of the United Nations shall receive and circulate to all States the text of reservations made at the time of ratification or accession". This article also provides that the Secretary-General shall inform all States of any reservations, declarations, objections and notification of withdrawal of reservations to the Convention. The document also contains a list of those States parties that had deposited with the Secretary-General instruments of acceptance of the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention, as well as those that had signed and ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention.